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Joint Policy on Occupational Education

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GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

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MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION
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MAY, 1977

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Massachusetts Department of Education
Joint policy on occupational education
LC 1046
May 1977

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Joint Policy on Occupational Education

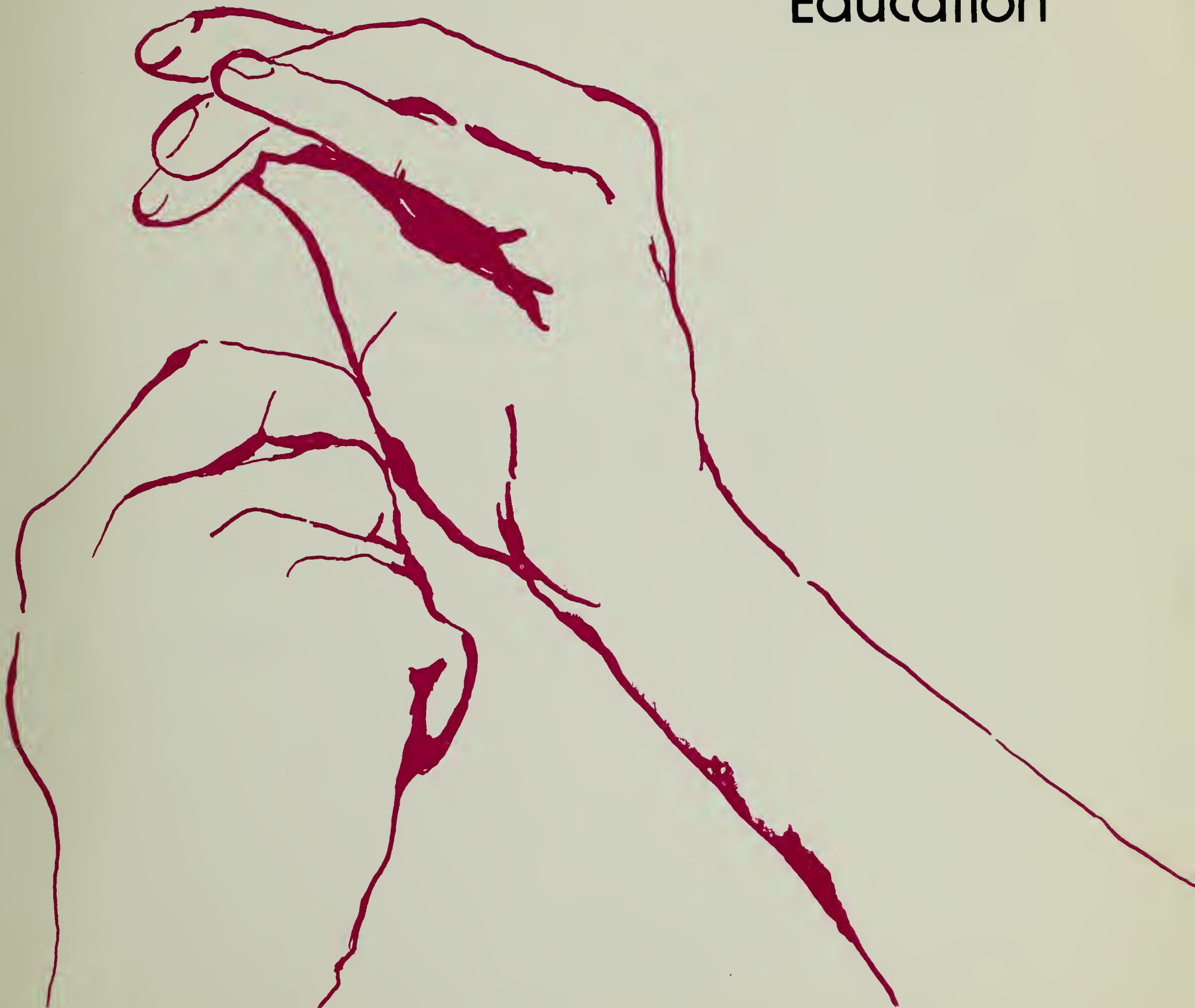


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I. REASON FOR THIS POLICY

The Board of Education is the State Board for Vocational Education under state and federal law. As such it is responsible for coordination of policy development for vocational education, for preparation of the five year state plan for vocational education, and for administering federal and state vocational education funds at the postsecondary and secondary school levels. The fastest growing postsecondary institutions providing publicly-supported occupational education are the regional community colleges. Regional community colleges in Massachusetts are governed by the Board of Regional Community Colleges.

The Board of Education and the Board of Regional Community Colleges recognize their respective statutory responsibilities. Both boards are committed to extending and improving occupational education in the Commonwealth, and to planning and implementing postsecondary programs of occupational education with mutual collaboration and cooperation.

This policy shapes this mutual collaboration and cooperation by identifying important areas of agreement between the two boards regarding future directions for occupational education. The policy is not viewed as an end, but rather as the beginning of a new form of cooperative planning aimed at expanding and improving postsecondary occupational education in Massachusetts. It is through such joint efforts of the two boards that Massachusetts' statutory commitment to lay governance of education at all levels can be fulfilled in the area of postsecondary occupational education.

II. GOALS AND DEFINITIONS

Both boards have formally adopted educational goals governing the institutions for which they are responsible. Included in these goals statements (Appendix A) are the following:

"To provide the learner with the skills, experience and attitudes, and the guidance for initial job placement; it is equally important for the learner to develop a capacity to adapt to changing conditions".

-Board of Education

"To provide the kind of learning environment that will appropriately challenge the individual student to the continuing discovery and development of his intellectual, occupational, emotional, ethical-social, recreational, and civic interests throughout life."

"To develop the quantity, quality, and work orientation of program offerings which will meet the varied and changing needs of a diverse student body."

-Board of Regional Community Colleges

Some view occupational education in terms of conflicting objectives between the needs and desires of the student, and the needs and realities of the economy. Our boards believe both objectives can be served. Secondary schools and community colleges have the responsibility for counseling students on requirements and prospects of various careers. They have the responsibility to design curriculum in a manner to develop skills which can be transferred among job clusters during a working career. And they have a responsibility to help students make informed, individual choices. There already exist in the secondary schools and regional community colleges of Massachusetts examples of occupational programs which do this effectively. The challenge is to expand access to such programs throughout the Commonwealth

*The Vocational Education Act of 1976 defines the areas of postsecondary educational agencies and vocational education programs in the following sections of the Act. Sec. 110 C (1); and Sec. 195, (1), (12). (See Appendix B)

It is the position of the Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education that occupational education is an essential and integral part of all education. It should provide students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to determine and achieve fulfilling career goals. More specifically, education for the world of work should develop in students:

- the ability to compute and communicate clearly
- an understanding of one's talents and interests
- the capacity to work with others to accomplish tasks
- an understanding of the conditions, requirements and benefits of the world of work and enterprise
- the ability to understand and select from a range of career opportunities
- general and specialized skills required for employability in a changing economy where transferable skills are increasingly required for several occupational fields during a career.

A sound general education is essential for occupational fulfillment and success. A comprehensive program of occupational education requires high quality general education as well as high quality occupational skills and knowledge.

Occupational education, thus defined*, is a program which aims to open opportunities for students rather than restrict them. Its aim should be to prepare the student to compete successfully in the world of work, now and for the future, without precluding choices including further formal education.

III. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION



A. The issue of Access

The Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education jointly reaffirm their common commitment to expanding access to all educational programs, including occupational education, for those citizens of the Commonwealth who, in the past, were and presently are under-represented in publicly supported postsecondary education. The boards are determined to live up to their responsibilities under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and state Chapter 622 which guarantee important educational rights of access.

The Board of Regional Community Colleges in its Admissions Policy dated November 12, 1976 and the Board of Education in its Policy on Occupational Education dated March 23, 1976 have identified minorities, bilingual, handicapped students and, in the occupational education, female students as underrepresented populations. Students in programs of occupational education in regional community colleges, as a matter of policy, should reflect the diversity of the college's service area as defined in the Admissions Policy. Total statewide enrollments in occupational education for the regional community college system, as a matter of policy, should reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth. Highest priority for postsecondary federal Vocational Education Act funds administered by the Board of Education will be given to programs implementing this priority policy in regional community colleges.

B. Improvement of Guidance

Both boards recognize the importance of effective counseling at the secondary school level to the fulfillment of this equal access objective and to aid all students in preparing for careers which are attainable and fulfilling. The Board of Education will promote improved guidance and, in cooperation with regional community colleges, increase communication with secondary schools regarding the opportunities afforded students of the Commonwealth by the regional community college system through conferences, joint counselor workshops, and improved dissemination of information. The involvement of business, industry, union and agency expertise in helping students make informed career decisions is strongly encouraged.

In the area of occupational information, the boards recognize the need to support and share mechanisms now being developed that can provide community college and high school students with reliable data on the job market, regionally and statewide. They will also promote joint in-service education programs for community college and high school counselors.

C. Provision of Support Services

Both boards also acknowledge that substantial support services are necessary, if individuals from under-represented populations are to successfully participate in occupational programs. Examples of these services are reinforcement programs in communications and computational skill areas, occupational exploratory programs, and motivational programs.

D. Use of Community Resources

The boards encourage occupational education programs to use community resources such as business, industry, unions, and public and private agencies. They are especially supportive of cooperative education and the challenge examination system which recognize the value of learning from on-the-job work experience. Programs of occupational education jointly conducted with business, industry, unions, and agencies should be expanded and be an integral part of future program development wherever appropriate and possible.

In addition to collaboration with community resources, both boards recognize and endorse the growing number of examples of help being given to regional community colleges and secondary schools by the employing community. Many firms and agencies are making important contributions to improved occupational education in the Commonwealth. We welcome this invaluable assistance and encourage its expansion.

Both boards wish to take special note of the educational services of community agencies at the postsecondary level. Care should be taken not to compete with these services. Contracted use of educational services from community agencies is encouraged, in accordance with appropriate state procedures. Such agencies have been particularly successful in reaching underserved populations and can be an asset in expanding access to publicly supported occupational education for postsecondary students.

E. Collaboration with Economic Development Programs

All publicly supported institutions have an interest in the economic vitality of the Commonwealth. Institutions capable of providing occupational education are a resource which should be involved in promoting economic development. In addition to developing educated and skilled entrants to the work force, both boards recognize an obligation to assist in and provide retraining programs on a continuing basis. New

initiatives are strongly encouraged to provide short-term postsecondary occupational training programs which will be an attraction to new commerce and to commercial establishments already located in Massachusetts. The boards wish to expand their involvement in and support of economic development and offer to work jointly with the executive offices of economic affairs, manpower development, and employment security to plan, develop and seek funding for such programs.

F. Continuing Education and Community Service

Postsecondary occupational education can and should be viewed as service to the community as well as to the individual. Programs and curriculum should be planned so as to serve the needs of the area in which the regional community college is located, consistent with statewide goals and objectives of the Board of Regional Community Colleges.

The boards support continuing education as a means for citizens of all ages to expand their learning and seek retraining for new career opportunities. The 1976 federal Higher Education Act amendments expand support for what is called "Lifelong Learning". Both boards recognize the need for further study, program development and collaboration in this area and commit themselves to joint planning to attract to Massachusetts greater federal funding for such programs.

Efficient planning requires that coordination be improved so as to avoid inappropriate duplication and overlap in continuing education offerings provided for an area by the community college and public school districts. This can best be done locally, and both boards encourage each community college at least annually to initiate this coordinated planning with public school districts in its primary service area. The Department of Education's regional centers will assist in promoting participation by appropriate school officials.

G. Relationships of Regional Community Colleges, Regional Vocational Technical High Schools and General High Schools

It is the policy of the Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education to promote the efficient use of educational resources. Such efficiencies take on special importance when you consider enrollment projections for the near future which indicate significant drops in normal secondary and postsecondary age groups. Collaboration and cooperation between community colleges and secondary

schools in occupational education both at the postsecondary and secondary levels can lead to efficiencies in time, staffing and facilities which can more effectively use scarce state and local educational funds now and in the future. Priority in the award of federal Vocational Education Act funds will be given to such collaboration.

The following will govern the recognition of credits:

As established by agreement with the Board of Higher Education...

- Associate Degree in Arts or Science - awarded only by the Board of Regional Community Colleges.
- Associate Degree in Applied Science - awarded by the Board of Regional Community Colleges; can be awarded for collaborative programs of postsecondary occupational education, approved by the Board of Regional Community Colleges, with regional vocational technical high schools, county agricultural schools and with general high schools.
- Certificate - awarded by the Board of Regional Community Colleges or regional vocational technical high schools or general high schools (with approval of the Division of Occupational Education) for 1-2 year postsecondary occupational education programs.

As established by policy of the Board of Regional Community Colleges...

- Credits under the challenge examination - awarded by the Board of Regional Community Colleges to recognize demonstrated skills acquired through experience, apprenticeship or secondary programs of occupational education in regional vocational technical high schools or general high schools.

The Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education agree that the policies above which presently apply to regional vocational technical high schools should apply equally to general high schools as indicated. They particularly support further development of the challenge examination and other approaches as means of assessing and recognizing individual competency, regardless of the source of learning.

The boards encourage higher priority for joint programming between community colleges and secondary schools, including contractual arrangements for the sharing of programs, facilities and services (within limits contained in respective collective bargaining agreements).

In all collaborative efforts, emphasis must include aggressive efforts to reach and educate the previously underserved population of the Commonwealth referred to under "The Issue of Access" above. Programs conducted in cooperation with area high schools and the employing community can be invaluable means for achieving this priority objective.

H. The General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

The boards recognize a need for better planning and coordination in services to prepare students for the GED test. The boards will direct their executive officers to establish a staff working group to prepare joint recommendations for the boards



IV. RELATIONSHIP OF STATE BOARDS GOVERNING POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

A. Board of Regional Community Colleges and Board of Education

It will be the joint policy of the Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education to cooperate fully with each other and to coordinate all planning for postsecondary occupational education in regional community colleges.

All grant proposals from regional community colleges for federal funds under the Vocational Education Act and for such other funds administered by the Board of Education, must first be reviewed and recommended by the Board of Regional Community Colleges. The aim of this agreement is to assure that the planning and funding of postsecondary occupational education in regional community colleges is consistent with and supportive of this joint policy and other policies of the Board of Regional Community Colleges.

The boards agree that administration, monitoring, evaluation and technical assistance for occupational education projects in regional community colleges will be conducted by staff of the Board of Regional Community Colleges with involvement and assistance from the Division of Occupational Education. The Board of Regional Community Colleges, in turn, agrees annually to prepare and submit to the Board of Education a comprehensive evaluation report on each regional community college grant for occupational education awarded by the Board of Education.

B. Other State and Local Agencies:

The boards welcome collaboration with the Executive Office of Educational Affairs in the area of interagency cooperation at the state level. This is viewed as a basic role of the Executive Office of Educational Affairs. In particular there is a need for better labor market information and coordinated job placement counseling. The boards support present collaborative efforts with the Executive Office of Economic Affairs in these areas and urge expansion of these efforts to include greater coordination of state plans required for federal funding.

Both boards support the state planning mechanism contained in the 1976 Amendments to the Vocational Education Act as a means for expanding involvement and consultation in the development of a Five Year State Plan for Occupational Education.

The boards also see a need for better two-way communication with licensing boards, accreditation agencies and unions which are a major influence on occupational education programming.

C. Board of Higher Education

The Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education recognize the statutory responsibility of the Board of Higher Education for planning and approval of postsecondary programs, including occupational education, which lead to a one-year certificate or a degree. In submitting programs for approval by the Board of Higher Education, the Boards will use Executive Office of Economic Affairs labor market projections, regionally adjusted as appropriate, and they urge the Board of Higher Education to be governed by the same data in reaching decisions on program approval.

The Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education accept responsibility for program content and quality in all postsecondary occupational education programs.

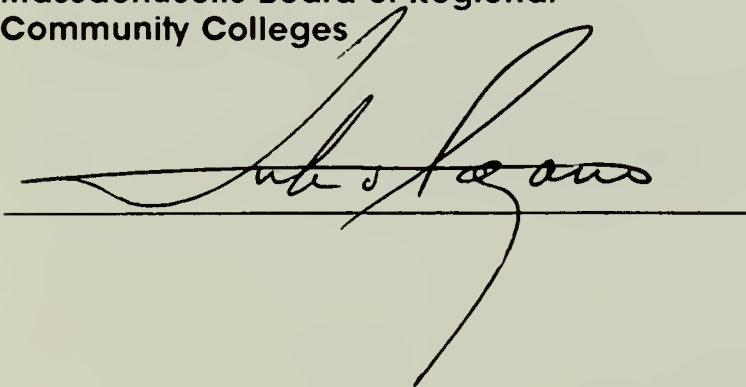
D. Cooperation in In-Service Education

The boards recognize that successful implementation of this joint policy requires help for personnel affected by it in regional community colleges, the community and in secondary schools. They encourage staff of both boards to collaboratively plan and conduct such joint workshops as will promote communication, effectiveness and sharing expertise, with special attention to involving representatives of the employing community.

V. CONCLUSION

The agreements contained in this policy reflect the first formal action jointly taken by the Board of Regional Community Colleges and the Board of Education to establish future directions for postsecondary occupational education. It is viewed as the beginning of continued collaboration to which both boards are committed as a matter of policy.

**Massachusetts Board of Regional
Community Colleges**

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and appears to read "John P. ...".

Massachusetts Board of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Charles H. ...".

VI. APPENDIX

A. GOALS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES

GOALS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION

1. Physical and Emotional Well-Being

To contribute to the learner's physical and emotional well-being, especially to a sense of personal worth and to a capacity for influencing one's own destiny.

2. Basic Communication Skills

To develop in each learner the basic skills needed for communication, perception, evaluation, and conceptualization of ideas. Among the most important are reading, writing, speaking, listening, visual and computational skills.

3. Effective Uses of Knowledge

To provide for each learner access to man's cultural heritage, stimulate intellectual curiosity, and promote intellectual development.

4. Capacity and Desire for Lifelong Learning

To foster and stimulate in each learner the natural desire for lifelong learning and develop the skills necessary to fulfill that desire.

5. Citizenship in a Democratic Society

To provide each learner with a knowledge and understanding of how our society functions in theory and in practice, and to foster individual commitment to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and to protect the rights of others.

6. Respect for the Community of Man

To provide each learner with knowledge and experience which contribute to an understanding of human similarities and differences and which advance mutual respect for humanity and for the dignity of the individual.

7. Occupational Competence

To provide the learner with skills, experience and attitudes, and the guidance for initial job placement; it is equally important for the learner to develop a capacity to adapt to changing conditions.

8. Understanding of the Environment

To provide each learner with knowledge and understanding of the social, physical, and biological worlds and the balance between man and his environment and to develop in the learner attitudes and behavior leading to intelligent use of the environment.

9. Individual Values and Attitudes

To expand and advance the humane dimensions of all learners, especially by helping them to identify and cultivate their own spiritual, moral, and ethical values and attitudes.

10. Creative Interests and Talents

To provide each learner with varied opportunities to nurture interests, to discover and to develop natural talents, and to express values and feelings through various media.

GOALS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1. Quality of Life

To provide the kind of learning environment that will appropriately challenge the individual student to the continuing discovery and development of his intellectual, occupational, emotional, ethical-social, recreational, and civic interests throughout life.

2. Quality of Student Services

To provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to student services.

3. Quality of Instruction

To promote continuous efforts toward improving instruction and toward developing the flexibility in instructional techniques that is necessary to meet the needs of a varied clientele.

4. The Open Door

To provide residents of the Commonwealth with an optimum opportunity for access to a college education consistent with their interests and aptitudes and to reduce to a minimum the economic, social, psychological, and academic barriers to educational opportunity.

5. Diversity of Programs

To develop the quantity, quality, and work-orientation of program offerings which will meet the varied and changing needs of a diverse student body.

6. Maximization of Resources

To promote the optimum use of educational resources, both public and private.

7. Cooperation

To cooperate with government, industry, business and service agencies in the provision of educational services to assist in solving problems related to the development of the Commonwealth's economy and its human and natural resources.

8. Access to Facilities

To provide on a regional basis, community college facilities and services at locations which are reasonably convenient to all citizens of the Commonwealth.

B. EXCERPTS FROM THE VOCATIONAL ACT OF 1976

"(c) For each fiscal year, at least 15 per centum of each State's allotment under section 103 shall be used to pay 50 per centum of the cost of vocational education for (1) persons who have completed or left high school and who are enrolled in organized programs of study for which credit is given toward an associate or other degree, but which programs are not designed as baccalaureate or higher degree programs.

(l) The term 'vocational education' means organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree; and, for purposes of this paragraph, the term 'organized education program' means only (A) instruction related to the occupation or occupations for which the students are in training or instruction necessary for students to benefit from such training, and (B) the acquisition, maintenance, and repair of instructional supplies, teaching aids and equipment; and the term 'vocational education' does not mean the construction, acquisition or initial equipment of buildings or the acquisition or rental of land.

(12) The term 'postsecondary educational institution' means a nonprofit institution legally authorized to provide postsecondary education within a State for persons sixteen years of age or older, who have graduated from or left elementary or secondary school.

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